

POCKET PC EXPERT

FAQ

Q What new features will Windows Mobile 6 have, and when will it be available?

A Windows Mobile 6 will feature a number of changes and improvements, but here are some of the major ones. There will be three versions of Windows Mobile 6: Standard, Professional and Classic. Standard is for compact, non-touch-screen phones; Professional is for touch-screen PDA smartphones; and Classic is for the few remaining touch-screen PDAs that are not also phones.

Windows Mobile 6 compact smartphones will be able to edit Word and Excel documents and view PowerPoint presentations. The new version will also make it easier to use your handheld as a modem for your notebook over Bluetooth; you no longer have to set up virtual COM ports or enter modem initialisation strings. The new operating system will start appearing on handhelds in the middle of 2007.

Steve Clack

Handheld consultant, trainer and editor



pocketpc@computershopper.co.uk

Get inspired with a handheld

Your Pocket PC isn't just there for practical things – it's also there when inspiration strikes. **Steve Clack** ensures that his handheld is primed for that next brilliant idea or invention

Because you can always keep your PDA to hand, it is uniquely suited to tasks that are otherwise hard to stay on top of, such as managing your finances. Gathering piles of receipts and scrappy notes on a weekly or monthly basis in order to enter expenses into a PC-based finance package is a tedious business. With a PDA-based equivalent, you can quickly enter each transaction within minutes or seconds of the event, making the process far more approachable.

However, your Pocket PC isn't just there for the humdrum aspects of your life. If you're prone to fits of inspiration in the middle of the night or while travelling on the bus, you can use your Pocket PC to record your brainstormed notes and scribbles there and then. Of course, you could use a paper notepad to record your thoughts, but the benefit of a handheld is that you can immediately store the information in exactly the right place. Then you don't have to bother transcribing notes at a later stage, and you don't risk losing the originals in the meantime.

In addition, if you are suddenly reminded of something you need to do at work the next day, you can turn the thought immediately into a timed and dated task. If you think of something you need to buy from the local bookshop, it can go straight into whatever program you use to store your shopping lists.

A great tool when it comes to note-taking is PhatPad (\$40, around £20, from www.phatware.com). This program, which often gets a mention within these pages, is the last word in digital jotter applications. If you don't feel that you want to splash out £20, though, the built-in Notes application on your Pocket PC will let you jot down basic drawings and text notes alongside voice recordings.

MEMOIRS ARE MADE OF THIS

Even if you have little aspiration to publish your memoirs, it's handy to keep a daily record of your most memorable experiences for your own reference and for posterity. This could include places you've visited,

STYLETAP StyleTap



\$50 (around £25)

The Palm operating system was around for quite a few years before Pocket PCs arrived on the scene. Although it's losing ground quite rapidly now, there are almost 20,000 applications available for Palm OS, many of which still compare favourably to Pocket PC equivalents. You may have spotted one or two Palm OS applications you'd like to try out, or perhaps you've recently migrated from Palm OS to Pocket PC; either way, it's now possible to run most Palm OS applications directly on your Windows Mobile device, thanks to StyleTap 1.0.

This is an emulator that runs within the Pocket PC operating system. It lets you load up Palm programs via a desktop installer and run them just as you would on a standard Palm handheld. There are a few programs that won't run, such as Palm Hacks, and like most emulators it's slower than the real thing. Otherwise, the biggest limitation is that the current version displays graphics only at a resolution of 160x160 pixels. As a result, icons and images look blocky compared to those on the latest Palm handhelds. Text appears at high resolution, though, and you can even beam applications and data directly from other Palm handhelds via infrared.

Palm applications can be accessed straight from your normal Pocket PC Start menu, so you don't have to open StyleTap



▲ Enjoy the best of both worlds by using StyleTap to run Palm OS applications on your Pocket PC

and search for them in the Palm launcher. Exchanging data in either direction is no problem; you can simply copy and past text from any application via the clipboard. Text input into any Palm application running under StyleTap is via whatever is running on your Pocket PC, so you can use your normal keyboard, Block Recogniser and so on, as well as third-party input alternatives.

StyleTap is an excellent and easy-to-use application for anyone needing access to Palm software.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Supports 95 per cent of Palm software
- ✓ Runs applications from Start menu
- ✗ Low screen resolution for graphics

SUPPLIER www.styletap.com



▲ Don't forget that you can use your Pocket PC as a dictaphone to record spoken notes that can be transposed when it's more convenient

events you've attended and maybe even a list of cinema visits. There are plenty of ways to make this easy with a Pocket PC, so you'll never have to spend more than a minute or so making each entry. In addition, simplifying the process in this way means you're much more likely to keep it up in the long term.

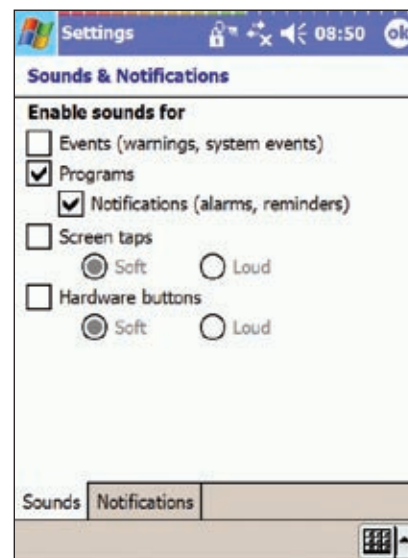
The easiest way to do this is to add typed notes into standard Calendar entries for the relevant day. You may decide to use one of the advanced PIM applications to replace the built-in Calendar, such as Pocket Informant (\$25, around £13, from www.pocketinformant.com) or Agenda Fusion (\$30, around £15, from www.developerone.com). Both these programs include a basic Journal feature that lets you automatically add date- and time-stamped text notes into your daily calendar as you go.

If you prefer not to have your personal memoirs mixed in among your business appointments and to-do lists, try Daynotez (\$20, around £10, from www.natara.com), a dedicated diary application that keeps your personal notes separate. This program also lets you categorise, sort and filter your entries, and even export them to a desktop companion application (which costs an extra \$15, around £8). This makes it easy to

Sounding off Turning off the beeps

Most users get annoyed by the standard beeps that seem to accompany almost every screen tap on a Pocket PC. However, it's easy enough to turn these off without silencing your wake-up alarms and important reminder sounds. To silence the beeps for good, choose Settings from the Start menu, then tap on the Sounds & Notifications icon from within the Personal tab of the Settings screen. From there, disable everything except the Programs and Notifications (alarms, reminders) option.

If you'd like to customise the sounds you hear for the alarms and reminders, look in the adjacent Notifications tab at the bottom of the screen. From here, you can experiment with a variety of chirps, beeps and pops for a dozen different event types. To change alarm sounds, go to Clock & Alarms from the System tab of the Settings screen, tap on the alarm bell icon to the right of the alarm you wish to change, and choose your favourite alarm sound from the drop-down list.



▲ Get rid of the extraneous beeps made by your Pocket PC without silencing alarms

keep a running list of cinema visits or meetings you've attended, for instance, and scan through them with just a few screen taps. By assigning categories to each entry, you can run work and personal diaries in parallel.

SPEAK EASY

If you're driving, or otherwise unable to make entries directly into your handheld, don't forget that every Pocket PC also doubles as a digital dictaphone. Just map your fifth hardware button (this is usually located down the left-hand side of your handheld) to the built-in recording feature, and you'll be able to make voice recordings with no more than a single tap. Because your Pocket PC multitasks, you'll be able to play back the recording when you next have a spare moment and type a transcription of your voice notes into Pocket Word (Word Mobile) or any other application of your choice.

Resco Audio Recorder (\$20, from www.resco.net) is the ultimate digital voice recorder. It offers adjustable voice-activated recording, so you don't even need to press a button to start the process, and you can export your recordings into a variety of formats.

CLOSE CALL

Remember, these schemes will fail if you don't have your Pocket PC close by.

When you're in bed, it should be sitting on your bedside table, where it can also function as your alarm clock. When you're at work or travelling, it should be tucked in your pocket or handbag. Your PDA won't be able to assist you if it's not constantly to hand.

So don't just think of your Pocket PC as a replacement for your Filofax or a conventional notepad. Use it to its full potential while exploring your own, and do things you'd never have dared to attempt with pen and paper. **CS**



▲ Keep your Pocket PC close by at all times and you'll always be prepared

Media studies Collecting media on a handheld



What's the best way to keep track of my media collection on a Pocket PC?

A If you want to record and keep track of any collection on your handheld PC, whether it's your CDs, DVDs, books or stamps, there are several ways to approach the project.

To do it for free, set up Pocket Excel (Excel Mobile) with one column for each category of information you'd like to store, such as title, artist/author, rating and so forth. Then just use one spreadsheet row to enter each item. You'll be able to use the spreadsheet's Find function to search for a particular item. By using the AutoFilter feature, you'll even be able to set your worksheet to show only those

items that contain a particular word or phrase in a specified column. You can also use the Sort facility to re-order your list in ascending or descending alphabetical order based on a specified column.

The whole process becomes unwieldy with big lists; fortunately, there are more sophisticated alternatives available. You could use a list manager program such as ListPro (\$30, around £15, from www.iliumsoft.com), which provides good sorting and filtering capabilities together with the flexibility to add data fields containing tick boxes, date fields, priorities and so on, while still being straightforward to set up.

If you'd like the flexibility to create custom views and filter data as well as the ability to rearrange everything to appear exactly where

you want on the screen, you'll need a full-blown database application. It will take some effort to learn, but you'll be able to customise it to specifically suit your needs. HandBase Professional (\$40, around £20, from www.ddhsoftware.com) is a good bet. If you have previous experience with database applications or are familiar with Microsoft Access, try Data on the Run (\$15, from www.biomobility.com), which can also read Microsoft Access files directly.

Finally, a few pre-configured database applications are available for specific uses. A good example is Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide 2007 (\$20, from www.landware.com), which comes with a comprehensive built-in DVD/video database that's set up and ready to use.